

Exploding The Phone

db861

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Bibliographic Cover Sheet

Title **FBI File 139-LA-500: Illicit Manipulation and Entry Into Telephone Communications; Activities of Phone Phreaks and Phone Sophistics"; OO: LA**

Date 1976-02-06

Author(s) FBI

Abstract "Control file" to coordinate information concerning an increase in illicit manipulations and entries into telephone communication systems by phone phreaks and phone sophisticates. Includes several memos from RFJ, WHS, and WOH. Includes interview with several Woodland Hills phreaks. Includes interview with Colin Chambers.

Keywords FBI; blue box; Los Angeles, CA; Colin Chambers; Woodland Hills, CA

Notes Originally obtained under FOIPA 1065071 (phreaks); see db949 for less redacted version.

See also db949

Source FBI via FOIA

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : ADIC, LOS ANGELES (139-500)

DATE: 2/6/76

FROM : SA

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b7C

SUBJECT: ILICIT MANIPULATION AND ENTRY
INTO TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS;
ACTIVITIES OF PHONE PHREAKS AND
PHONE SOPHISTICS
IOC
OO: LA

An increase of illicit manipulations and entries into telephone communication systems by phone phreaks and phone sophisticates have arisen during the recent past. This illicit activity concerns telephone security of private citizens, businesses, and local, state, and Federal Government agencies.

It is therefore recommended that a control file be opened to coordinate this type of information.

INDEX:
Phone Phreaks
Phone Phreaks
Phone Sophisticks



WHS:ism
(2)

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2-076
Jan
dal

139-500-1

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
FEB 9 1976	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	
SERIALIZED.....	
FILED	

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Los Angeles, California

February 10, 1976

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.



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On January 6, 1976, [redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted] Los Angeles,
California, provided information concerning the



5 - Bureau
2 - Los Angeles [redacted]

RFJ/njs/meh

(7)

139-500-2

SEARCHED —

INDEXED

SERIALIZED

FILED

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

DATE: 2/10/76

FROM : ADIC, LOS ANGELES [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] aka
IOC
OO: Los Angeles

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Re Los Angeles teletype to the Bureau dated
12/22/75 captioned, "UNSUB, aka [REDACTED] IOC."

Enclosed herewith are five copies of a letterhead
memorandum dated 2/10/76 captioned, [REDACTED]
aka." Information contained therein is a summary [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

2 - Bureau (Encl. 5)
② - Los Angeles [REDACTED]

RFJ/meh
(4) *[Signature]*



139-500-3

SEARCHED
INDEXED
SERIALIZED
FILED

[Handwritten initials and signature]

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC, LOS ANGELES (139-500)

DATE: 2/12/76

FROM : SA [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: INFORMATION CONCERNING
TELEPHONE MANIPULATORS
OO: Los Angeles

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Two items attached to this memorandum, both of
which were furnished by [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] are self-explanatory.

*Really
large
~ 43 pp.*



WHS/rjn
(1) *rjn*

1*

139-500-4

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 23 1976	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC **LOS ANGELES**DATE: **3/2/76**

FROM : SA [REDACTED]

(P)

SUBJECT: [REDACTED]

b2
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Dates of Contact 2/18/76	
File #s on which contacted (Use Titles if File #s not available or when CI provides positive information) Blue Box Control File LA 87-36272 (Info) IOC Control File LA 139-0 (Info)	
Purpose and results of contact <input type="checkbox"/> NEGATIVE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POSITIVE <input type="checkbox"/> STATISTIC Source furnished four typed reports on phone frank techniques.	
<input type="checkbox"/> POSITIVE ASSIGNMENT GIVEN	
Has informant shown any indication of emotional instability, unreliability or furnishing false information? No	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Informant certified that he has furnished all information obtained by him since last contact, including information concerning narcotics.	Coverage Criminal
PERSONAL DATA [REDACTED]	139-500-5 SEARCHED INDEXED SERIALIZED FILED 23 MAR 5 1976 FBI - LOS ANGELES

1 - [REDACTED]
1 - **87-36272 (Info)**
1 - **139-0 (Info)** **Attn: SA [REDACTED]**

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date of transcription 6/7/76

[redacted]
[redacted] was interviewed in the presence of
his parents, [redacted] and furnished
the following information:

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[redacted] acknowledged that he had
been in telephonic contact and personal contact in the
past with persons known as "phone phreaks". [redacted] advised
that in the past year he has been attempting to disassociate
himself with these persons.

He advised that he had utilized the alias
[redacted] when contacting persons known to him to possibly
be involved in violation of Federal law concerning
the interception of communications and fraud by wire
matters. These persons in the past have been attempting
to try to identify [redacted] and this has caused him per-
sonally and his family a great deal of harassment and
invasion of privacy.

[redacted]
[redacted] advised he would relate
and try to recall in chronological order his contacts
with phone phreaks.

[redacted] explained that he first became aware of
"phone phreaking and blue boxes" when he read an article
appearing in the October 1971 issue of Esquire magazine
entitled, "The Secrets of the Little Blue Box".

Interviewed on 5/26/76 at Woodland Hills, File # Los Angeles
California

by SA [redacted] /pla Date dictated 6/1/76

139-500-6

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[] his first
phone phreak acquaintance was a []
true name unknown, who was a "test trunk line phreak".
[] and
knew a [] (Last Name Unknown) (LNU) from Van Nuys,
California, about 17 years of age who was a "routing
line phreak".

[]
[] he became acquainted with a very
brilliant young man named [] who was then
16 or 17 years of age. [] was not a college
student, but a brilliant "phone phreak".

[] started a phone phreak meeting
with a "chain letter type personal invitation"; that
is, for security reasons, he invited several of his
close personal friends deeply involved in illegal phone
phreaking activities to invite several familiar phone
phreaks that they knew and trusted, and who would in
turn invite one or two other well known and trusted
associates for a meeting of all west coast phone phreaks.

[]

[] had for some time had a
unique telephone number (prefix unknown) [] which

3
LA

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was actually a telephone test trunk number.

About half the persons assembled were from out of town. Ten of the persons assembled were [redacted] street kids. [redacted] sells maps to movie stars' homes and operates telephone lines where people can talk to one another without knowing who they are. He puts out phone recordings over these lines setting out technical information on blue boxes and multi-frequency devices and keeps open a conference line for people to "camp on".

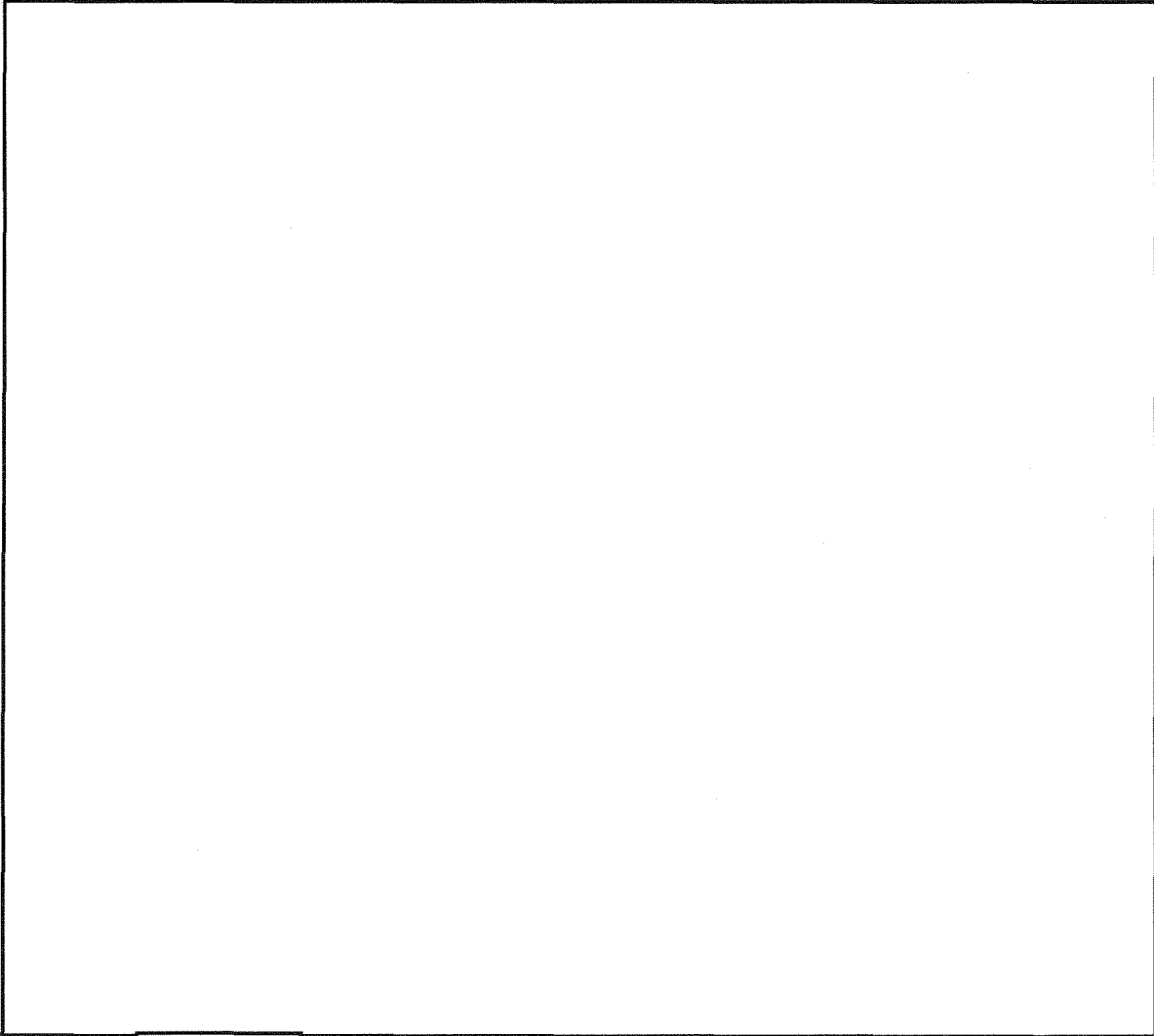
The ten street kids were movie star map vendors who worked for [redacted] and had gotten into phone phreaking through his telephone line service.

One of the most prominent phone phreaks to attend the meeting was [redacted] also known as [redacted] [redacted] advised that he is a radio ham having extra class license [redacted] and [redacted] had noticed that [redacted] had ham radio call numbers on his blue Volkswagen van, which was stacked with batteries and telephone equipment at that time.

Because the October 1971 Esquire magazine article was so recent, interest was very high in blue boxes.

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LA



[redacted] advised that one of the most intelligent persons concerning phone phreaking techniques that he had ever met was [redacted] advised that [redacted] always impressed [redacted] because [redacted] wanted information for knowledge's sake where the others always wanted to know how to get away with it.

[redacted] met other phone phreaks through "loop-arounds" where phone phreaks would camp out. [redacted]

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LA [redacted]

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advised that one of the most heavily used "loop-arounds" in the Western Hemisphere had been located in Canoga Park, California. Phone phreaks from the United States, Canada, and western Europe would camp out on this "loop-around" until the phone company became aware of it. The "loop-around" number was 883-1118.

Through this loop-around, [redacted] met [redacted]
[redacted] also known as [redacted]
[redacted] advised through his above acquaintances
he met [redacted]

The phone phreaks that [redacted] came to know sought out businesses dealing in telephone company equipment to try and buy equipment which the phone phreaks could convert or utilize in blue boxes. Two of these businesses were:

Four Star
(now defunct)
Westchester, Los Angeles, California

J.J. Glass Company

[redacted] advised that another phone phreak he met was [redacted] also known as [redacted] a UCLA student who supposedly had a blue box.

Another phone phreak was [redacted] of Marina del Rey, California, who had been a student at Santa Monica City College and started out as a lock freak.

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LA

[redacted]

[redacted] advised that phone phreaks have in the past used ham radios to call persons asking them to call loop-arounds. [redacted] advised that one night he heard an unidentified ham radio operator say, "Anyone out there call 981-1119". [redacted] said he called the loop-around and either heard or heard of [redacted]

[redacted] some phone phreaks had once wired [redacted] fire alarms into the phone lines so they could use the fire alarm system for phone phreaking.

[redacted] advised at one time there were a lot of joke lines. One such line which is perennially in operation despite all efforts by the phone company to terminate it is the "fun phone" number 990-4936, operated by a [redacted] It is an illegal hook-up always utilizing the same phone number. Another number is 391-5336.

[redacted] advised another phone phreak was [redacted] also known as [redacted]

[redacted] operated two offset presses and published material on "how to do it" to make illegal blue boxes and use them [redacted] had lots of telephone company equipment in his office and apparently was doing a landslide business.

[redacted] advised that he has had no recent contact with most of these persons for over a year as he has been attempting to avoid these people involved in possible illegal phone phreaking activities.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1Date of transcription 6/7/76

[redacted]
[redacted] was advised of the identity of the interviewing agent, the basis of the interview, and of his rights as they appear on a Standard Advice of Rights Form, which he read but declined to sign, consenting to a limited interview. [redacted] furnished the following information:

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He does not possess, manufacture, or sell any devices whose functional purpose is primarily for the interception of any wire or oral communication in violation of Federal law. He does not possess or have access to a "blue box" or multi-frequency tone generating device used for the purpose of circumventing long distance telephone company billing machines.

He advised he is very interested in the telephone system and is in possession of information concerning persons commonly known as "phone phreaks".

He advised that he wished to be totally cooperative with law enforcement in identifying individuals who may be in violation of the law in the interception of communications and requested that the interview be discontinued to a later time to allow for the presence of his parents.

Accordingly this interview was terminated.

Interviewed on 5/26/76 at Woodland Hills, California File # Los Angeles

by SA [redacted] /pla Date dictated 6/1/76

139-500-61A

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SAC, LOS ANGELES [redacted] (C)

6/16/76

SA [redacted]

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[redacted]
IOC
OO: Los Angeles

This investigation was instituted for the purpose of determining if wire communication interception devices were manufactured, assembled, possessed or sold by a person not authorized by law in violation Title 18, Section 2512, USC, or if such person utilized such devices to intercept any wire communication in violation Title 18, Section 2511, USC.

AT LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

On 6/2/76, [redacted] was interviewed in depth at his residence, [redacted]. Results of investigation indicated that [redacted] is not in violation of the IOC Statutes.

Accordingly, it is recommended this case be administratively closed.

① - 139-500 (Info)

(att. SA [redacted])

WOH/rdl
(2) *rdl*

139-500-6/B

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date of transcription 6/7/75

[redacted]
[redacted] furnished
the following information:

He is an Industrial Arts Instructor [redacted]

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He stated that he has installed a telephone switchboard in an Industrial Arts class to teach students the telephone company system and electronics.

He advised that through his classes, he has contacted and come to know some of the "Phone Phreaking" community in Los Angeles, California.

[redacted] advised that all of his equipment in his residence and in his classroom is tariff equipment, that is, legally installed or connected by the phone company.

[redacted] advised that he has no knowledge of how to intercept wire communications or of persons who may be engaged in such activities. He does not personally know, nor does he know of anyone who manufactures, sells, or possesses equipment primarily useful for the purpose of illegal interceptions of communications. He advised he has no blue boxes.

He advised that he has only seen two blue boxes in his experience:

- 1) One was in the possession of the telephone company
- 2) One was in the possession of some guy from the east coast who gave a false name and two years ago claimed he was making them for sale.

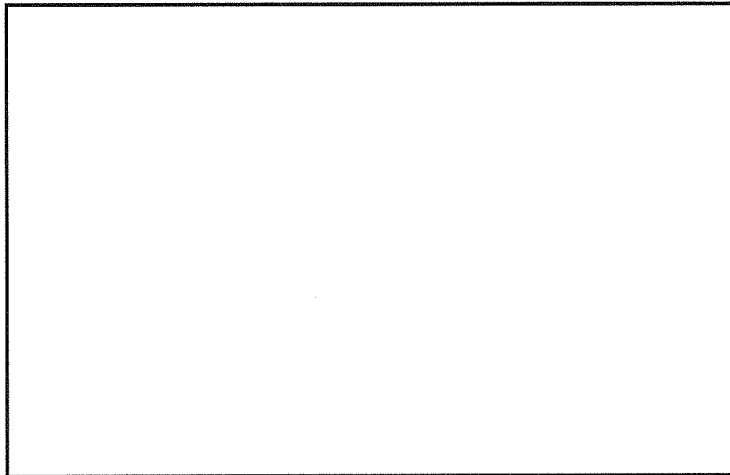
Interviewed on 5/26/76 at Glendale, California File # Los Angeles

by SA [redacted] /pla Date dictated 6/1/76

139-500-7

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The only problem with this fellow's
blue boxes was that they did not work.

[redacted] advised that he himself has been responsible for advising telephone company security agents of two problems that they had in their telephone service. [redacted] said he complained once to Bell Telephone Company [redacted] because of a fault in the phone company system; toll free charges could be made to certain phone numbers supposedly blocked without the aid of a blue box. [redacted] explained that within the telephone system, there are certain numbers for the internal use of the telephone company. The general public is not supposed to be able to reach the operators at those numbers; that is, the numbers are blocked. However, persons calling from certain phones within the telephone company can reach such operators. Because the operators think they are shielded from the general public, they tend to respond to requests of the caller without requiring proper identifications. The telephone company had an entire list of numbers they thought were blocked which their system was not protecting. Some kids became aware of that and were utilizing the special operators to make toll free long distance telephone calls.

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LA [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] advised a second problem was one exploited by a young phone phreak [REDACTED] discovered you could call area code (312) for Chicago, then (121) (inbound operator), then four digits and get the telephone company operator. You would then instruct her what number you wanted and she would connect you free of charge to any telephone in the United States.

[REDACTED] advised that a young phone phreak named [REDACTED] had once been involved in a telephone credit card fraud. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reportedly made a deal with the telephone company that they would not prosecute if he gave information about his discovery.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] in San Francisco, California. When they returned, it was learned that [REDACTED] was interested in computer freaking and was not concerned much with telephones anymore.

[REDACTED] advised that he would divide his associates or persons known to him into two groups. The first group being those who know the most about the telephone system but are not involved in any known illegal activities concerning the telephone system; and the second group being the actual phone phreaks, those persons who were or are most likely involved in the use of blue boxes or illegal techniques.

[REDACTED] advised that in the first group the most intelligent person he knew was [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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[redacted]
[redacted] advised that he has never heard anything from [redacted] to indicate that [redacted] is engaged in any illegal activities.

[redacted] advised that the second individual he knows who should be out of the previously illegal activities he engaged in was [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted] advised that among those persons known to him in the second group who may be or may have been engaged in illegal activities are:
[redacted]
[redacted]

SAC, LOS ANGELES [redacted] (C)

6/16/76

SA [redacted]

CHANGED (IO)

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b7C

[redacted]
IOC

OO: Los Angeles

Title changed to set forth correct spelling
of [redacted]

This investigation was instituted for the purpose of determining if wire communication interception devices were manufactured, assembled, possessed or sold by a person not authorized by law in violation Title 18, Section 2512, USC, or if such person utilized such devices to intercept any wire communication in violation Title 18, Section 2511, USC.

On 6/2/76, [redacted] an Industrial Arts instructor [redacted] was interviewed at his residence [redacted] and he cooperated in furnishing information known to him concerning multi-frequency devices and possible users.

Investigation determined that [redacted] is not in violation of the IOC statutes.

Accordingly, it is recommended this case be administratively closed.

139-500-7/A

1 - 139-500

NON/rdl

(2)

(Att: SA [redacted])

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1
—Date of transcription 6/10/76

[redacted] voluntarily appeared at the Los Angeles Office of the FBI, 11000 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, California, and after being advised of the identities of interviewing agents was furnished with an advice of rights form which he read, stated he understood but declined to sign.

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[redacted] was informed that his appearance was voluntary and that he was free to leave at any time. He was advised of the basis for the interview and stated the following:

He did not wish to answer any questions concerning [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] advised that he was willing to discuss any matters of technical knowledge which he may possess concerning the technique by which a person could have committed the illegal interception of communications.

Thereafter the interview was terminated.

Interviewed on 6/7/76 at Los Angeles, California File # Los Angeles
by SA [redacted] and [redacted] Date dictated 6/10/76
SA [redacted] WOM/rdl

139-500-8

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11000 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90024
June 16, 1976

Mr. William D. Keller
United States Attorney
U. S. Department of Justice
U. S. Courthouse, Room 1269
Los Angeles, California 90012

Re: [redacted]
Interception of Communication

Attention: AUSA Deanne H. Smith

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Dear Mr. Keller:

Investigation was instituted for the purpose of determining if [redacted] manufactured, assembled, possessed or sold any wire communication intercepting devices in violation of Title 18, Section 2512, United States Code, or if he had used such a device to intercept any wire communication in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2511.

In November 1974, the press carried stories of a Santa Barbara, California, nuclear disaster hoax in which long distance telephone customers had made complaints to the Telephone Company and local law enforcement authorities that someone had briefly intercepted their calls to the Santa Barbara area advising the caller there had been a nuclear disaster and that Santa Barbara had been blown off the map.

This investigation was initiated to identify and interview [redacted] and was predicated on information that he was knowledgeable of multi-frequency devices used for surreptitious circumvention of Telephone Company long distance communications equipment.

139-500-8/B [initials]

- 2 - Addressee
- 2 - Los Angeles

(1) - 139-500 (Info SA [redacted])

WOH/rdl
(4)

rdl

[REDACTED]

On June 7, 1976, the facts of this matter were discussed with Assistant U. S. Attorney Deanne H. Smith by Special Agent [REDACTED] Assistant U. S. Attorney Smith advised she would decline prosecution for lack of evidence of a violation within the statutes covering the illegal interception of communications.

Accordingly, this matter is being closed.

Very truly yours,

ROBERT E. GEBHARDT
Assistant Director in Charge

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date of transcription 6/25/76

[redacted] was located at his place of employment, [redacted]

[redacted] After being advised of the identity of the interviewing agents and the basis for the interview, he furnished the following information:

[redacted] operates a radio, electronics, and communications installation and repair service business.

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In his business he has been approached in the past by persons who seek services for the purpose of obtaining, installing or repairing surreptitious interception of communication devices.

Through his business he has in the past, been acquainted with persons involved in "phone phreaking", by means of blue boxes or multi-frequency devices.

[redacted] advised that to his knowledge [redacted] is no longer engaged in phone phreaking in view of his previous conviction.

[redacted] was asked if he knew of any illegal wire tapping or interceptions of communications presently being committed by the Santa Monica Police Department.

[redacted] emphatically stated that he definitely knew the Santa Monica Police Department was into wire tapping and interceptions of communications.

Interviewed on 6/15/76 at Santa Monica, California File # Los Angeles 139-508-9

by SA [redacted] and SA [redacted] MOH/pla Date dictated 6/21/76

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[redacted] When questioned specifically how he knew that, [redacted] stated that he took the statement back and that he assumed that they did it.

[redacted] went on to say that several years ago, ten or 15 years ago, he knew some Beverly Hills Police Department detectives and from conversations with them, he obtained the opinion that the Beverly Hills Police Department was then conducting surreptitious wire taps or interceptions of communications.

[redacted] advised that in the recent past representatives of the Santa Monica Police Department had approached him requesting a bid for installing monitoring equipment in the Santa Monica City Jail, possibly for a holding cell. [redacted] stated that he did not receive the job.

[redacted] advised that he would be alert in the future for persons approaching him requesting surreptitious interception of communication devices or service and would cooperate with the FBI concerning activities involving a violation of Federal law.

[redacted] stated that he often sold telephone monitoring or recording equipment to persons, particularly doctors and lawyers for office use. When advised that the use of this equipment ordinarily did not involve any violation of Federal law, but might involve a violation of the California Penal Code, Sections 630 to 632, providing that all parties to a confidential wire communication must consent to any recording by any one party, [redacted]

[redacted] stated that he was totally unaware of any California law in the matter.

SAC, LOS ANGELES [REDACTED] (C)

6/17/76

SA [REDACTED]

CHANGED (IO)

b6
b7C

[REDACTED] aka

IOC

OO: Los Angeles

Title changed to set forth name and alias of subject.

This investigation was instituted for the purpose of determining if wire communication interception devices were manufactured, assembled, possessed or sold by a person not authorized by law in violation Title 18, Section 2512, USC; or if such person^{was} utilizing such devices to intercept any wire communication in violation Title 18, Section 2511, USC.

On 6/14/76, [REDACTED] was interviewed at his place of business, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Investigation has determined that [REDACTED] is not in violation of the IOC statutes and is not in possession of information concerning such violation by others.

Accordingly, it is recommended this case be closed administratively.

① - 139-500

WOH/rdl
(2)

139-500-9/A

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JUN 22 1976	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1Date of transcription 6/24/76b6
b7C

[redacted] was contacted at his place of business. [redacted] and after being advised of the identity of the interviewing agent and the basis of the inquiry, he furnished the following information:

He advised he did not possess, manufacture, or sell any wire communication interception devices and had no current information concerning them. He declined further interview.

[redacted] is described as follows:

Name
Sex
Race
Born

Height
Weight
Hair
Eyes

Telephone number

Interviewed on 6/14/76 at Santa Monica, California File # Los Angeles

139-500-110
[redacted]

by SA [redacted] pla Date dictated 6/18/76

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SAC, LOS ANGELES [redacted] (C)

6/17/76

SA [redacted]

CHANGED (IO)

b6
b7C

[redacted] aka

IOC

OO: Los Angeles

Title changed to set forth correct true name and alias of subject.

This investigation was instituted for the purpose of determining if wire communication interception devices were manufactured, assembled, possessed or sold by a person not authorized by law in violation Title 18, Section 2512, USC; or if such person utilizing such devices to intercept any wire communication in violation Title 18, Section 2511, USC.

On 6/14/76, [redacted] was interviewed at his residence [redacted]

Investigation determined that [redacted] is not in violation of the IOC statutes.

Accordingly, it is recommended this case be administratively closed.

1 - 139-500

WOH/rdl
(2)
W

*Case
admin
12/31/80
JH*

139-500-10/A

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JUN 22 1976	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

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